U.S. Department of Education
2009 No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools Program

Type of School: (Check all that apply) [X] Elementary [] Middle [] High [] K-12 [] Other
[] Charter [] Title I [] Magnet [] Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Jolee Healey

Official School Name: Victor H. Hexter Elementary School

School Mailing Address:
9720 Waterview Rd
Dallas, TX 75218-2137

County: Dallas State School Code Number*: 057905153

Telephone: (972) 502-5800 Fax: (972) 502-5801

Web site/URL: http://www.dallasisd.org/schools/es/e_h/hexter/ E-mail: jhealey@dallasisd.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent*: Dr. Michael Hinojosa

District Name: Dallas ISD Tel: (972) 925-3700

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Jack Lowe

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

_____ Date _____
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

**Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*
Original signed cover sheet only should be mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as USPS Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, NCLB-Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173.

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)

2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.

3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2008-2009 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.

4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.

5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.

6. The nominated school has not received the No Child Left Behind – Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, or 2008.

7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.

8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.

9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.

10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district:

157	Elementary schools
33	Middle schools
0	Junior high schools
31	High schools
6	Other
227	**TOTAL**

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 7466

   Average State Per Pupil Expenditure: 7797

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

   [X] Urban or large central city
   [ ] Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
   [ ] Suburban
   [ ] Small city or town in a rural area
   [ ] Rural

4. 4 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

   ___ If fewer than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	23	19	42	**7**			0
K	46	45	91	**8**			0
1	42	34	76	**9**			0
2	41	34	75	**10**			0
3	35	27	62	**11**			0
4	32	19	51	**12**			0
5	22	36	58	**Other**	4	2	6
6			0				
		TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL					461

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school:

____	% American Indian or Alaska Native
3	% Asian
27	% Black or African American
33	% Hispanic or Latino
____	% Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
37	% White
____	% Two or more races
100	**% Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 22 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred ***to*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	36
(2)	Number of students who transferred ***from*** the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	65
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	101
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	469
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.215
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	21.535

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 17 %

Total number limited English proficient 77

Number of languages represented: 5
Specify languages:

Spanish, Amharic, Hindu, French, Russian

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 60 %

Total number students who qualify: 275

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 12 %

Total Number of Students Served: 55

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

2	Autism	0	Orthopedic Impairment
0	Deafness	6	Other Health Impaired
0	Deaf-Blindness	14	Specific Learning Disability
0	Emotional Disturbance	23	Speech or Language Impairment
1	Hearing Impairment	0	Traumatic Brain Injury
7	Mental Retardation	1	Visual Impairment Including Blindness
0	Multiple Disabilities	0	Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	Full-Time	**Part-Time**
Administrator(s)	1	0
Classroom teachers	28	0
Special resource teachers/specialists	5	0
Paraprofessionals	9	0
Support staff	4	0
Total number	47	0

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 **17 :1**

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	97%	96%	96%	97%	96%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	97%	97%	95%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	14%	12%	12%	10%	12%

Please provide all explanations below.

2007-2008, Hexter's turnover rate exceeded 12% due to promotions, retirements, and transfers.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2008 are doing as of the Fall 2008.

Graduating class size	0	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0	%
Enrolled in a community college	0	%
Enrolled in vocational training	0	%
Found employment	0	%
Military service	0	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0	%
Unknown	0	%
Total	**100**	%

PART III - SUMMARY

Hexter Elementary, located near White Rock Lake in the Dallas Independent School District, celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2005. Nestled in a diverse neighborhood of African-American, Hispanic, and Anglo families, Hexter has a unique three-way balance of ethnicity among our 460 students. Of our total student population, 60% qualify for free or reduced lunch. Hexter's tradition of excellence in teaching and learning, consistent parental involvement, and strong community partnerships support our mission of preparing all students to be college-ready. The culture within Hexter enables students to master the knowledge and skills necessary to become future leaders. Each of these attributes has great merit on its own, but it is the combination of these strengths that has allowed Hexter to achieve Texas Education's Agency's highest ranking of "exemplary."

Our students' success is largely due to the incredibly talented and devoted teachers that expect the best from students daily. Their dedication and united focus on school-wide goals has enabled our students to dramatically increase achievement as measured by double digit gains on state assessments. Our faculty's commitment to excellence is demonstrated during weekly grade level meetings, where teachers engage in collegial study of curriculum documents and share effective teaching and learning artifacts. In addition, vertical teams of teachers meet monthly to identify school-wide needs within their content area, create initiatives, and implement research-based best practices. Alignment and collaboration through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) has ensured a successful cycle of continuous campus improvement.

Learning comes to life at Hexter. Classrooms are filled with deep discussions, problem-solving, purposeful reading, and reflective writing. Students socialize their learning in groups while articulating connections, citing evidence, and building on each others' ideas. Teachers are skilled in small group instruction to ensure differentiation for all students at appropriate levels. Consistent with best practices, Hexter maintains a model inclusion program where students are offered non-categorical support for learning. This ensures students, regardless of need (learning disabled, ESL, slow learners, or high achievers), receive support within the classroom during the school day. In addition to inclusion, Hexter offers learning interventions each morning and afternoon in the form of tutoring, mentoring, and computer-based programs.

Outstanding parent and community support is another factor that positively impacts our students' success. Through our PTA, parents volunteer tirelessly to provide funding for special programs by hosting annual events that include: 5K race, carnival, art festival, silent auction, and home tour. The funds raised translate into instructional technology for each classroom, thousands of dollars in literacy library materials, and the on-going expansion of our art, music, and garden programs. The PTA also provides funding for after school enrichment programs free of charge to our students (such as drama, art, music, Spanish, fitness, and environmental clubs). Our Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) team, comprised of teachers, parents, and community members, actively supports the improvement of student achievement through the study of data, research, and education books. As educational researcher Michael Fullan (1997) states, "Research is abundantly clear: Nothing motivates a child more than when learning is valued by schools and families/community working together in partnership" (p. #). Hexter provides a prime example of how cohesive, long-lasting partnerships result in significant academic achievement.

An unrelenting commitment to student achievement, collaboration on the part of all stakeholders, high expectations for all learners, and clearly defined goals are the tools that help us provide the best education for each of our students. Hexter's dedication to excellence evolves from our shared conviction that each child brings something unique to the world, that every child truly matters, and that each and every child carries within them our hope for the future.

PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

1. **Assessment Results:**

During the 2007-2008 school year, Hexter earned the Texas Education Agency's highest rating of "exemplary" for the second year in a row. For elementary schools in Texas, the exemplary rating is awarded to campuses in which at least 90% of students in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grades successfully pass the state tests, known as the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). Students in 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade take both the Reading and Math TAKS. In addition to these two assessments, students in 4th grade take the Writing TAKS and students in 5th grade take the Science TAKS. Each subgroup containing 30 or more students is reported separately to ensure equity in achievement. For Hexter, that includes separate subgroup scores in reading and math for African American, Hispanic, Anglo, and economically disadvantaged students. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are administered a state approved alternative assessment and are included in the campus data summary for achieving yearly growth.

The TAKS assessments are designed to evaluate a student's ability to apply content knowledge and utilize critical thinking skills. Individual students earn a "met standard" if they score at or slightly above the assessment's minimum standard. Hexter is proud to report that the number of students who met standard has dramatically increased over the past four years. As reported in the Texas Education Agency Blue Ribbon data file, from 2004 to 2008, the number of students who passed the Reading TAKS rose from 45% to 98%. During the same time period, the number of students who passed the Math TAKS soared from 36% to 96%. Specifically, the amount of students who passed the Reading TAKS increased by 50% for African American students, 60% for Hispanic students, 43% for Anglo students, and 61% for economically disadvantaged students. In math, the number of students who passed increased by 59% for African American students, 60% for Hispanic students, 62% for Anglo students, and 64% for economically disadvantaged students. Our campus takes great pride in the closing of the achievement gap between subgroups at the met standard level.

The amount of students earning "Commended Performance" has also risen considerably. Commended performance is attained by demonstrating a mastery of approximately 90% or greater. From 2004 to 2008, the number of students who earned commended performance increased from 4% to 43% in reading and increased from 4% to 63% in math. These scores earned Hexter the Texas Education Agency's Gold School Performance Award for having more than 25% of the student population score a commended performance in math, reading/language arts, writing, and science.

Currently, a small gap remains in achievement at the commended performance level between students who are economically disadvantaged and students who are not. In reading, a 4% disparity exists between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students. In math the disparity is 9% between these subgroups. Among ethnic subgroups on the Reading TAKS assessment, twice as many Anglo students score at the commended performance level than any other ethnic subgroup. On Math TAKS, the commended performance scores vary among subgroups with Hispanic students at 85%, Anglo students at 63%, and African American students at 47%. These gaps in scores among subgroups closely mirror our Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) scores for students in 2nd grade. However, the initial gap size among subgroup scores has significantly decreased since first measured at the end of kindergarten.

Our current goals reflect our commitment to continue closing the achievement gap among subgroups for commended performance levels. Our campus is dedicated to preparing all students to become college-ready by providing them the cognitive tools necessary to be successful on the TAKS and in their future life. For more information about Texas state assessments, please visit:
http://www.tea.state.tx.us/perfreport/aeis/2007/index.html

2. **Using Assessment Results:**

Data analysis provides the foundation for our campus-wide goal setting, instructional planning, and professional learning. Each year, we review assessment scores for students in all grades. In kindergarten through second grade we focus on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), running records, and the Texas Primary Reading Inventory (TPRI). In third through fifth grade, we focus on the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) as well as district benchmarks and other campus-based common assessments designed to reflect achievement of Texas curriculum standards. Assessment data is analyzed by grade, objective, subgroup, and trend. This analysis leads to the drafting of goals and initiatives which are presented to the faculty and the Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) team for input and revision. Once goals are finalized and adopted by our faculty, they are then communicated to all stakeholders.

At the classroom level, assessment data is used to drive our instruction for whole and small groups. Teachers meet weekly in grade level meetings to align their teaching practices, curriculum content, and to review results of benchmarks and other common assessments. Teachers conduct an item-analysis of test questions to identify gaps in understanding and common trends among students' responses. This information allows teachers to reflect on the effectiveness of their teaching as individuals and as a team. Lesson plans are then collaboratively designed to focus on the most effective teaching and learning practices. Teachers also rely on the data to create strategic interventions such as inclusion support, mentoring, and tutoring for students who are experiencing difficulty. Students are able to use assessment data to understand their academic progress and develop self-management skills. Students chart their progress, measure growth, celebrate improvement, and explain strengths and challenges to their parents during parent conference meetings. This careful and continuous analysis of assessment data enables Hexter teachers and students to improve teaching and learning.

3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

Communicating student performance and assessment data to all stakeholders is a valued practice at Hexter. At the beginning of each year, families are given a Hexter Calendar/Handbook that contains important information for the upcoming school year, including dates for meetings and assessments, operational procedures, and campus instructional goals and initiatives. This information is carefully reviewed in our Parent/Teacher Orientation Night the first week of school. A detailed slide show presentation with assessment data in the form of graphs and charts is presented to our Site-Based Decision-Making (SBDM) team in our first meeting of each year, which is open to all parents and community members. Posters of campus goals and student achievement are visible throughout the building to serve as reminders of our mission and to acquaint visitors with our purpose. Stakeholders are kept up to date with regular newsletters and copies of our annual Texas Education Agency school report card. Displays of annual performance data, SBDM agendas, PTA newsletters, and other pertinent information that facilitates unity of purpose are highly visible upon entering our school.

Students are deeply engaged in the self-management of their own learning. Hexter recently initiated holding student-led parent conferences, in which students review their own levels of academic performance and identify strengths and challenges. Students graph progress and identify strategies for improvement. Students are then able to objectively explain learning to their parent using personal assessment data. Tremendous ownership has been developed as a result of these practices and improvement is recognized and celebrated regularly with our popular Hexter "Improvement Parties." Disseminating assessment data through the calendar/handbook, presentations, newsletters, and student-led conferences allows students, parents, teachers, and community members to study the performance data and understand how it is used to inform our teaching and learning.

4. **Sharing Success:**

Hexter takes an active role in working with other Dallas ISD campuses. Within this large urban school district, Hexter has become a model school among hundreds of elementary campuses. The Dallas ISD is divided into four smaller learning communities, meaning Hexter actively participates in training with a group of 39 other elementary schools. Together, our Campus Instructional Leadership Teams (CILT) meet to share student work and discuss best teaching practices. Additionally, Hexter is part of a vertical learning community that is comprised of all the elementary and middle schools that feed into our local high school. Principals meet monthly to discuss issues related to student achievement goals and effective instructional practices. At these meetings, Hexter consistently brings high quality teaching and learning artifacts to share with other campuses in order to communicate strategies that have been successful with our students.

Dallas ISD provides a framework for professional learning through a partnership with the Institute for Learning (IFL). The IFL has brought the practice of "Learning Walks" alive on our campus. Learning Walks are a vehicle for teachers and other professionals to visit each others' classrooms to gain insight regarding the fidelity of implementation of campus learning goals. Hexter has been honored to host several Learning Walks for other Dallas ISD schools as well as for schools from surrounding districts. During the Learning Walks, visitors ask students questions, including but not limited to, "What are you learning? Why are you learning that? How do you know if your work is good quality?" and "How can you improve your work?" Serving as a model site for other schools instills in students an added sense of importance and value for their daily learning endeavors. As a Blue Ribbon school, Hexter would continue its practice of welcoming visitors from other campuses and providing mentoring to teachers and principals.

PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. **Curriculum:**

Teaching and learning at Hexter is focused on student achievement. In order to ensure successful student performance, we rely on the state standards known as the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) to inform our educational practice. Our school district has curriculum specialists who develop curriculum planning guides (CPG) for each content area. The CPG is a valuable resource that provides teachers with lessons, projects, and other learning activities that are directly connected to the TEKS.

At our campus, each teacher within a grade level selects a content area in which to specialize. Teachers then carefully review their content area's CPG for the upcoming week and present the highlights at their weekly grade level meeting. Teachers share concepts, recommend lessons, and suggest materials to ensure grade level alignment. Sharing information from the CPG also provides a springboard for instructional analysis and collaborative planning. Interventions for struggling students are discussed, as well as extensions for high performing students. Teachers also attend the corresponding vertical content Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings to promote vertical alignment and consistency across grade levels.

In the area of reading and language arts, we embrace the principles of guided reading to ensure that each child receives small group instruction at their appropriate reading level. In the upper grades, we focus on literature circles and infuse our studies with non-fiction text. Our basal reader and our literacy library are used as resources. Language arts instruction is delivered in large and small groups with emphasis on purposeful reading, deep discussions, and reflective writing. Students regularly use rubrics to measure their own performance with the standards and are required to cite evidence to explain their thinking.

In math, students engage in daily problem-solving by incorporating real world experiences to the practice of spiraling concepts. Emphasis is placed on the various ways in which problems may be solved, as opposed to one correct way. Students apply mathematical concepts to project-based tasks while working collaboratively in teams. Teachers use assessment data to plan whole group lessons and target skills for intervention. Technology, in the form of computers, projectors, and document cameras, has become a fundamental resource in our math classes to share concepts in more concrete and interactive ways.

In both science and social studies, students are taught to pose questions, investigate answers, work collaboratively with peers, and share findings through reflective writing. Technology and project-based learning is also utilized to provide hands-on experiences, visual examples, background information, and models for communicating ideas. Writing school-wide, across all content areas, has particularly deepened our students' comprehension in science and social studies. Students are viewed as historians and scientists and are given hands-on tools with which to investigate concepts.

Physical education (PE) and fine arts are an important component of our school curriculum. In PE, students engage in movement through individual and team activities. PE provides students a place to expend energy and reinvigorate their brain for more effective learning. Our halls are adorned with exceptional student art and our monthly PTA programs highlight the musical talents of our students. Fine arts not only provide our students a way to express themselves as individuals, both classes support our core content areas of math, reading/language arts, science, and social studies. In art, our students read and study history before creating "historical" artifacts from that time era. In music, students learn to count notes and keep time, which helps them reinforce math skills. As a valued extension of the core curriculum, PE and fine arts provide students an opportunity to stay fit, expand their creativity, and develop talents for life-long learning and personal enjoyment.

2a. **(Elementary Schools) Reading:**

Hexter employs an authentic, balanced literacy approach that combines all components of effective reading instruction. Regardless of age, reading instruction begins with an assessment of each student's reading performance to ensure that the student is paired with an appropriately leveled text from our literacy library. In kindergarten through second grade, running records are conducted regularly to measure reading growth and identify areas of need. Teachers utilize the guided reading model to provide daily small group instruction focused on deciding, fluency, and comprehension. Other meaningful activities within the reading/language arts block include: rotation to literacy centers, participation in whole group reading activities with graphic organizers, engagement in sustained silent reading, enjoyment of read alouds, and utilization of literature as springboards for writing.

By third grade, students are independently applying critical thinking skills, deriving meaning by making connections to previously learned content and the world at large, and citing evidence for inferences and generalizations. Students use metacognitive strategies, write regularly to explain their thinking, and apply rubrics and criteria charts to measure and improve their work. By fourth and fifth grade, students are managing their own learning by synthesizing and evaluating written material to support and provide evidence for claims. Literature circles and non-fiction research studies are common practice in the upper grades.

In his book, Results Now, Schmoker references a recent study that found "the ability to read well is the single best indicator of future economic success – regardless of family background" (2006, p.57). With such long-lasting consequences at stake, Hexter teachers are committed to strengthening reading skills throughout all subjects. Purposeful reading, rereading, discussion, and writing are incorporated into every content area. Reading instruction is designed and revised continually through collaboration within teams of teachers working as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Resources are also devoted to early identification and intervention for students experiencing reading difficulty.

3. **Additional Curriculum Area:**

Low achievement scores on the 5th grade Science TAKS necessitated school-wide, systemic changes to our daily practice of teaching science. Our improvement began with the implementation of the 5E model for science (Engage, Explore, Explain, Extend, and Evaluate), supplemented with FOSS (Full Option Science System). FOSS is a research-based science curriculum created to engage students in exploring the natural world by learning important scientific concepts, developing the ability to think critically, and actively constructing ideas through authentic inquiries, investigations, and analyses. Science notebooks were incorporated as a tool for students to record and deepen their own understanding of concepts while developing effective communication skills. Within science notebooks, students model techniques used by real scientists to document their experience with the scientific method. Weekly writing tasks include designing questions, making predictions, recording data, explaining processes, and justifying conclusions. Comprehensive learning is further enhanced as students link concepts explored in the classroom to the world at-large. These activities employ Bloom's taxonomy at the highest levels of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The rigor of each science lesson, paired with writing in science notebooks, moves us closer to our mission of preparing our students for college-readiness.

Other initiatives that support valuable acquisition of science concepts are the creation of the Hexter garden program, participation in the Dallas Arboretum after school program, and our annual 5th grade science camp. Each of these gives students additional time for discovery and exploration of the real world through the lens of science. Each initiative above has been implemented after careful research and collaboration within our vertical science Professional Learning Community. The success our students have experienced as a result of improving our instructional practice of teaching science has become a point of pride for our students, staff, parents, and community and has become an exemplar for other schools.

4. **Instructional Methods:**

At Hexter, we believe each child is an individual with unique experiences, abilities, and needs. Differentiation is an integral part of our instructional practice because we understand that not every student learns in the same manner or at the same pace. The continued success of our school as a whole, and more specifically, of our subgroup populations is predicated on our teachers' ability to provide multiple paths for students to absorb, use, develop, and share concepts. Learning tasks are commonly differentiated by content, process, and products. This practice is strengthened through our inclusion program by dedicating additional teachers, teacher assistants, and trained volunteers to work directly in the classrooms with students. Assessment is closely linked to our practice of differentiated instruction and provides the basis for movement among groups. By maintaining fluidity in groups, students receive the help they require at their current level of ability and understanding.

Differentiation in the different content areas includes, but is not limited to: meeting with students to develop background knowledge before an assignment is given, reteaching needed skills, providing additional practice for a particular concept, presenting concepts in a visual, auditory, and kinesthetic way, and incorporating the use of manipulatives and technology. Project -based learning in all content areas is another vehicle for differentiation. Projects are student-directed and thus offer students the flexibility to demonstrate their learning in a manner that is appropriate to their ability, understanding, and effort. Although instruction is differentiated in every content area, it is most easily identified in reading/language arts due to varied ability among students. Through reading assessments, students are paired with appropriately leveled texts and taught in small groups. This practice enables students to accelerate their progress. Differentiated instruction in reading and other content areas increases student engagement and ownership for learning while positively impacting student achievement.

5. **Professional Development:**

Hexter utilizes Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as the framework for our professional development. The Campus Instructional Leadership Team (CILT), which is comprised of teacher leaders specializing in one of the core content areas, meets monthly with the principal to discuss and evaluate campus learning. CILT members, in turn, meet monthly with one content-specific teacher from each grade level to form a vertical content PLC. Vertical PLCs review student achievement data, study related research and best practices, and create campus initiatives. Some examples of topics studied and executed through Hexter's PLCs include: running records, guided reading, literacy centers, science notebooks, criteria charts and rubrics, and project-based learning. Other functions of PLCs include weekly grade level meetings where teachers review the curriculum planning guides and collectively plan for the following week's learning. Throughout the year, each grade level PLC and vertical content PLC is allotted an entire day for planning. This type of job-embedded professional development supports improvement of teaching and learning in the classrooms.

District-provided Institute for Learning (IFL) materials from the University of Pittsburg are first explored through the CILT and then implemented within the vertical and grade level PLCs. In the past three years, three of the Principles of Learning (Clear Expectations, Accountable Talk, and Academic Rigor), were studied and applied campus-wide. Additionally, our campus incorporates Learning Walks as a fundamental part of our professional development. During Learning Walks, 5-7 teachers visit classrooms to gauge the implementation of a campus initiative. Through these observations, participants gain not only ideas for their own classrooms, but insights to help plan the next steps in professional development. As opposed to the traditional "sit and get" type of professional training sessions of the past, PLCs generate a cycle of continuous learning that ensures professional development is applied and supported within our daily practice.

6. **School Leadership:**

Richard Elmore states:

The job of administrative leaders is primarily about enhancing the skills and knowledge of the people in the organization, creating a common culture of expectations, holding the organization together in a productive relationship with each other, and holding individuals accountable for their contributions to the collective results. (2000)

Within this multi-faceted job, the principal at Hexter is dedicated to ensuring that initiatives, policies, programs, instruction, and resources are utilized to benefit student learning and achievement.

The principal divides her time into two broad categories: instructional support and organizational management. Instructional support activities include: assuring that Hexter's mission and vision are paramount in the minds of all stakeholders, implementing a structure of weekly grade level meetings and monthly vertical PLCs that focus on effective teaching and learning practices, and sharing educational research for study within PLCs. The principal also provides disaggregated data of student achievement, collaborates on instructional planning, visits classrooms, and gives feedback regarding instruction and classroom management. Organization is the key to smooth daily operations and it is the principal's job to make sure the school's time and financial resources are managed to optimize teaching and learning. The principal oversees the day-to-day operational procedures such as the school's budget, master schedule, school policy, and the auxiliary departments such as food and custodial services. All campus decisions are conscientiously made based on how they might best impact student learning.

Another aspect of Hexter's leadership is the Campus Instructional Leadership Team (CILT) which meets with the principal monthly to help create campus goals, analyze data, study research, give input on decisions, and share best practices. The shared role of the principal and CILT is to lead and inspire the staff to improve their practice. Through collaboration and shared-decision making, our school has reached a level of effectiveness that promotes student achievement and the development of a strong, united community.

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 3 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills
Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
'Met Standard'	94	94	91	74	97
'Commended Performance'	49	30	44	18	26
Number of students tested	55	53	64	76	80
Percent of total students tested	96	88	94	81	86
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	7	4	3	2
Percent of students alternatively assessed	4	12	6	3	2
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
'Met Standard'	94	90	90	65	98
'Commended Performance'	38	13	33	15	17
Number of students tested	32	30	48	48	47
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
'Met Standard'	90	92	81	78	100
'Commended Performance'	21	8	33	19	14
Number of students tested	19	13	21	21	22
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
'Met Standard'	100	95	95	58	96
'Commended Performance'	57	16	40	7	11
Number of students tested	14	19	20	30	27
4. (specify subgroup): White					
'Met Standard'	100	94	95	89	97
'Commended Performance'	68	56	62	32	48
Number of students tested	22	16	21	25	29

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 3 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Feb	Jan	Feb	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
'Met Standard'	98	94	92	91	96
'Commended Performance'	47	35	44	33	31
Number of students tested	55	54	64	75	81
Percent of total students tested	96	90	94	81	89
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	6	4	5	3
Percent of students alternatively assessed	6	10	6	6	3
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
'Met Standard'	97	93	90	96	91
'Commended Performance'	34	20	29	31	0
Number of students tested	32	30	48	47	51
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
'Met Standard'	95	92	91	85	96
'Commended Performance'	32	8	19	23	0
Number of students tested	19	13	21	25	27
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
'Met Standard'	100	94	86	93	100
'Commended Performance'	36	28	33	19	0
Number of students tested	14	18	21	26	28
4. (specify subgroup): White					
'Met Standard'	100	94	100	85	94
'Commended Performance'	68	56	75	56	0
Number of students tested	22	18	20	27	24

Notes:

Data used in each table came from district provided ‘campus data packets” based on the total number of students tested; regardless of if they were present for PEIMS snapshot. The Texas Education Agency updates data to include only students present at the school on the PEIMs snapshot date for accountability purposes. Therefore, a slight variation may exist between our district tables and the state accountability data.

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 4 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills
Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
'Met Standard'	96	95	89	75	83
'Commended Performance'	34	54	37	25	21
Number of students tested	47	43	52	70	56
Percent of total students tested	86	80	88	74	72
Number of students alternatively assessed	8	11	7	5	8
Percent of students alternatively assessed	15	20	15	6	10
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
'Met Standard'	93	91	86	72	78
'Commended Performance'	19	36	23	19	18
Number of students tested	27	22	35	42	38
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
'Met Standard'	100	87	73	75	85
'Commended Performance'	18	27	7	30	12
Number of students tested	11	15	15	20	25
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
'Met Standard'	90	100	100	63	64
'Commended Performance'	26	46	50	19	21
Number of students tested	19	11	16	27	14
4. (specify subgroup): White					
'Met Standard'	100	100	95	87	93
'Commended Performance'	54	88	47	27	20
Number of students tested	13	16	19	22	15

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 4 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills
Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
'Met Standard'	96	88	79	68	83
'Commended Performance'	23	43	11	18	20
Number of students tested	48	42	53	68	56
Percent of total students tested	87	78	95	74	72
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	12	6	6	8
Percent of students alternatively assessed	13	22	10	7	10
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
'Met Standard'	93	81	75	63	81
'Commended Performance'	18	29	6	10	11
Number of students tested	28	21	36	40	38
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
'Met Standard'	100	67	69	68	92
'Commended Performance'	9	27	6	16	4
Number of students tested	11	15	16	19	25
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
'Met Standard'	90	100	88	54	57
'Commended Performance'	15	30	6	8	21
Number of students tested	20	10	16	26	14
4. (specify subgroup): White					
'Met Standard'	100	100	90	83	87
'Commended Performance'	54	69	21	32	33
Number of students tested	13	16	19	22	15

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics Grade: 5 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills
Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
'Met Standard'	92	96	91	78	43
'Commended Performance'	64	66	31	18	11
Number of students tested	52	44	45	55	65
Percent of total students tested	88	76	87	69	69
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	14	7	7	9
Percent of students alternatively assessed	12	24	13	9	11
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
'Met Standard'	87	92	86	77	33
'Commended Performance'	52	64	25	12	9
Number of students tested	31	25	28	41	35
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
'Met Standard'	85	88	73	70	35
'Commended Performance'	45	50	27	13	7
Number of students tested	20	8	11	23	15
3. (specify subgroup): Hispanic					
'Met Standard'	100	94	94	75	45
'Commended Performance'	85	71	24	9	0
Number of students tested	13	17	17	22	19
4. (specify subgroup): White					
'Met Standard'	94	100	100	100	54
'Commended Performance'	61	72	53	50	20
Number of students tested	18	18	17	10	30

Notes:

Subject: Reading Grade: 5 Test: Texas Assessment of Knowledge & Skills
Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2008 Publisher: Texas Education Agency

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
SCHOOL SCORES					
'Met Standard'	90	98	87	75	49
'Commended Performance'	40	21	18	14	4
Number of students tested	52	42	45	57	52
Percent of total students tested	88	72	87	71	67
Number of students alternatively assessed	7	16	7	7	11
Percent of students alternatively assessed	12	28	13	9	13
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free and Reduced Lunch/Socio-Economic Disadvantaged Students					
'Met Standard'	84	96	86	70	38
'Commended Performance'	36	13	11	2	3
Number of students tested	31	23	28	41	36
2. Racial/Ethnic Group (specify subgroup): African American					
'Met Standard'	85	83	75	68	43
'Commended Performance'	25	0	17	8	0
Number of students tested	20	6	12	25	19
3. (specify subgroup): Hipanic					
'Met Standard'	100	100	88	70	45
'Commended Performance'	33	12	0	4	5
Number of students tested	12	17	16	22	19
4. (specify subgroup): White					
'Met Standard'	90	100	94	100	64
'Commended Performance'	63	37	35	50	7
Number of students tested	19	19	17	10	14

Notes: